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Excerpt from the report of the Eighth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas*

* The complete report of the Eighth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas will be issued as document E/CONF.96/3.

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Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

The Eighth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas recommends to the Economic and Social Council that it endorse the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution 8/1
Benefits of developing a spatial data infrastructure

The Conference,

Noting resolution 1 on development needs and resolution 7 on the implementation of national spatial data infrastructure in the Americas adopted at the seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas,

Considering that the development of spatial data infrastructure in the Americas is important for the sustainable social and economic development of the region,

Also considering that the advancement of such development has been slower than expected in some countries,

Recommends that the national organizations or agencies in charge of the development of spatial data infrastructure in member States make an effort to obtain high-level government executives involved in the project, and, to achieve this end, encourages the heads of such bodies to make clear the benefits of developing a good spatial data infrastructure for countries and regions.

Draft resolution 8/2
Partnership approach in developing spatial data infrastructure

The Conference,

Noting the ability of some countries to support the development of the spatial data infrastructure in countries of the Americas,

1. *Recommends* that the countries of the region use the experiences of and the resources generated by other countries;

2. *Also recommends* that a partnership approach to the development of the spatial data infrastructure be adopted, following the model of the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas project, using bilateral cooperation.

Draft resolution 8/3
Training, education and spatial standards discussion

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 2 on institutional capacity-building, education and training, adopted at the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas,

Considering general and specialized training needs, such as the new remote spatial data infrastructure class in Cuba or the Finnish Internet global positioning system class as models,

1. *Recommends* that the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas add a training section to its revised website and seek support for regional workshops;

2. *Also recommends* that the Permanent Committee develop educational materials on the benefits of geographic data and mapping for cross-organizational consortiums and other United Nations programmes (for example, sustainable development and national security) and have its members attend non-geographical meetings at the United Nations and other forums to educate others about the value of spatial data infrastructure and geographic information;

3. *Further recommends* that the Permanent Committee review for adoption the two draft reports and the core standards document on spatial standards that have been prepared by the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group.

Draft resolution 8/4
Policy and reform

The Conference,

Considering the disconnection between spatial data producers and spatial data managers,

1. *Recommends* that the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas, in coordination with the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Secretariat, develop a spatial data policy on standard mapping, spatial data infrastructure and metadata requirements to be presented to donor agencies (for example, the World Bank);

2. *Also recommends* that the members of the Permanent Committee provide information on national policy, law or specifications to post on the websites of both the Permanent Committee and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Draft resolution 8/5
Outreach and related areas

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 6 on the contribution of the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas, adopted at the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas,

Considering the low level of activities in recent years and the inability to sustain progress,

1. *Recommends* that the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas meet more frequently, redefine its goals and roles and coordinate the development of its website;

2. *Also recommends* that the members of the Permanent Committee attend the upcoming meetings in Canada (June 2006), Santiago (November 2006) and Cuba (2007), as well as other relevant meetings, and seek funding for a regional spatial data infrastructure prototype for use as a model at meetings.

Draft resolution 8/6
Global mapping and second administrative level boundaries projects

The Conference,

Recognizing that the availability of fundamental framework data set, such as national administrative divisions, are crucial to the analysis and management of socio-economic phenomena,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Global Mapping Project and of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group Second Administrative Level Boundaries project in the generation of global seamless data sets of importance for the Americas;

2. *Recommends* that member States, particularly through their National Mapping Agencies, and notably with the help of the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas and the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, support and participate actively in the Second Administrative Level Boundaries project and the Global Mapping Project by providing the necessary data and information they require;

3. *Also recommends* that member States in the Americas take full advantage of participating in the Global Mapping Project for capacity-building to help establish national and regional spatial data infrastructures in the region.

Draft resolution 8/7
Geocentric Reference System for the Americas project

The Conference,

Considering the achievements obtained by the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas Project regarding the establishment of a continental geodetic framework,

Recognizing the efforts that have been implemented by many countries from the Americas towards the development of the activities of the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas,

Noting that not all countries have integrated their spatial data infrastructure into the Geocentric Reference System or other compatible systems,

Considering the ongoing efforts towards the establishment of a unique vertical reference system for the continent,

Bearing in mind the necessity of a globally integrated system,

1. *Recommends* reinforcing resolution 4 adopted at the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in 2001;

2. *Especially recommends* the integration of countries from Central America and the Caribbean into the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas project;

3. *Further recommends* that all countries keep working on the integration and dissemination of gravity and levelling data to support the unification of the height system.

Draft resolution 8/8
Satellite data

The Conference,

Recalling the continuous development of satellite systems for obtaining global data by optical and radar sensors to a level of importance to national mapping requirements, starting from Landsat in 1972 to QuickBird in 2000 and from Seasat 1978 to the Shuttle Radar Topographic Mission in 2000,

Also recalling the planned future moderate and high-resolution satellite sensor missions,

Considering that satellite image data products can be used to an accuracy of one to several metres in the form of geo-rectified images or digital elevation models,

Also considering that these products constitute a cost and time-effective alternative to provide synoptic and geometrically correct map substitute products to which existing map coverages may be fitted and updated, taking into account the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas as a geodetic framework,

1. *Recommends* the continuity of Landsat-like satellite missions and that Landsat-like observation systems be considered to monitor changing global environmental conditions;

2. *Also recommends* that satellite data be made available openly at the cost of reproduction and dissemination or under favourable conditions to developing countries, as foreseen in the forthcoming Advanced Land Observing Satellite Mission;

3. *Further recommends* that global digital elevation data from the Shuttle Radar Topographic Mission C-band mission be made available through the United States National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency at the highest possible posting for developing countries.

Draft resolution 8/9
Dissemination

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 7 adopted at the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, in which the Conference recommended that member States embrace the concept of national spatial data infrastructures and develop implementation strategies,

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive spatial data dissemination policy in each member State,

Noting the difficulties faced by many member States, aid and relief organizations and commercial enterprises in understanding existing spatial data infrastructure in many member States,

Also noting the necessity of a spatial data dissemination policy to be an essential component of spatial data infrastructure,

Recognizing the lack of a comprehensive and current spatial data dissemination policy is a cause of concern to development and disaster relief,

Also recognizing the different needs of the public, commercial enterprise, relief agencies, non-governmental agencies and United Nations agencies,

Bearing in mind the needs and objectives of each member State and the evolving nature of spatial data and emerging technologies and imaging platforms,

1. *Recommends* that member States examine, review and set a comprehensive spatial data dissemination policy;

2. *Also recommends* that member States freely distribute their spatial data dissemination policies;

3. *Further recommends* that member States examine, review and set a comprehensive pricing policy in accordance with the needs and objectives of various agencies such as public, commercial enterprise, relief agencies, non-governmental agencies and United Nations agencies.

Draft resolution 8/10
Funding issues

The Conference,

Noting the financial difficulties faced by many member States in the development of a basic national spatial data infrastructure,

1. *Recommends* that in various projects in developing countries supported by donor agencies, the agencies should also consider the inclusion of financial support for the development of spatial data infrastructure;

2. *Also recommends* that the donor agencies should set a policy in line with resolution 9 adopted at the eighth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas for the long-term dissemination of and public access to spatial data developed under such donor agency supported projects.

Draft resolution 8/11
Meeting on geospatial data infrastructure and information of the Americas for sustainable development

The Conference,

Considering that the Eighth United Nations Regional Cartographic Committee Conference for the Americas provided an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas, information and experiences on geospatial information, spatial data infrastructure and land management,

Recalling that the Regional Cartographic Conference has established the Permanent Committee on Geospatial Data for the Americas,

Considering that the United Nations, in collaboration with the Permanent Committee on Geospatial Data for the Americas, the International Federation of Surveyors, and Mexico, organized a special forum on development of land information policies in the Americas in Aguascalientes, Mexico, on 26 and 27 October 2004,

Recognizing that member States in the Americas need to continue advancing the exchange of information on geospatial approaches and spatial data infrastructure in order to address key issues such as sustainable development and land management,

Bearing in mind the financial limitations and importance of individual needs and approaches regarding geospatial information and spatial data infrastructure in the member States,

1. *Encourages* member States of the Americas to continue to exchange information, experiences and ideas concerning geospatial information and spatial data infrastructure;

2. *Recommends* that member States of the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas be encouraged to the extent possible to attend the gathering endorsed by the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in Canada in June 2006 to further the collaborative exchange of ideas, information and experiences on geospatial information and spatial data infrastructure of the Americas for sustainable development.

Draft resolution 8/12
Interregional meeting

The Conference,

Considering that spatial data infrastructures at the regional level are necessary as a basis of support for the development of information within a framework of harmonized purposes,

Having in mind that at the regional level spatial data infrastructures are under development in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Africa through organizations such as EuroGeographics, the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information, the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific, the Permanent Committee on Spatial Infrastructure for the Americas and the Committee on Development Information,

Considering that it would be convenient if these organizations could work and develop the regional spatial data infrastructures within a framework of harmonized and integrated purposes,

1. *Recommends* the presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of EuroGeographics, the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information, the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific, the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas and the Committee on Development Information hold a meeting for the purpose of evaluating progress in each region, examining common problems, proposing solutions and defining courses of action and policies, including possible ways of cooperation, which permit the harmonic development of spatial data infrastructure in each region according to common objectives in a context of global integration that would be of benefit to all; the particulars of the proposed meeting should be agreed upon by the five organizations and the outcomes reported to the United Nations;

2. *Asks* the United Nations Secretariat to assist, within available resources, in the preparation of such a meeting, including the identification of possible funding sources.

Draft resolution 8/13
Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas

The Conference,

Noting the progress made in the work on spatial data infrastructure at the national, regional and global levels, by States Members of the United Nations,

Noting also the essential role played therein both by the present United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference and by the Permanent Committee on Spatial Infrastructure for the Americas,

Further noting that the Permanent Committee was established in 2000 pursuant to a resolution adopted at the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas,[1]

Noting that the Permanent Committee has expressed its will to hold its Committee meeting in conjunction with the Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work,

Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas be convened in 2009.

Draft resolution 8/14
Vote of thanks

The Conference,

Expresses its deep appreciation to the Secretariat for the excellent substantive servicing provided to the Conference,

Expresses its sincere appreciation to the Bureau of the Conference and to the officers of the technical committees, the invited speakers and the representatives of international organizations for the excellent manner in which the Conference was conducted,

Expresses its thanks to the other officers of the Conference and staff of the United Nations, including the editors, interpreters, translators and secretarial support staff for their dedicated work.

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[1] *Report of the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, New York, 2-6 June 1997* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.I.5), Vol. I, chap. VI.B.